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UNCLAS HARARE 001001

SIPDIS

AF/PD FOR COX AND ROBERTSON, AF/S FOR KRAFT AND
SCHLACHTER, AF/RA FOR DIPALMA, INR/R/MR, NSC FOR
JENDAYI FRAZER

E.O. 12958: N/A

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SUBJECT: MEDIA REACTION ELECTION AFTERMATH; HARARE

1. Under headline "What price freedom?" the independent financial weekly "The Financial Gazette" dedicated its April 25 editorial to calling on Robert Mugabe to publicly condemn "the increasing acts of outright banditry by his supporters" in the aftermath of the disputed March presidential poll. Excerpts:
2. ". . .Mugabe's absolute silence on the increasing acts of outright banditry by his supporters is not only a cause for deep concern but begs the question of how far the terrorism will be allowed to go on before it is ended. The terrorism is not just confined to MDC followers or those suspected to be so, scores of whom have been brutally slain and tens of thousands of others displaced in their own country in the past two years. . . . Looting of property, assaults of countless individuals and the rape of women and young girls are all rising, courtesy of the same militia which has decided to eradicate the 'scourge' that is known as the MDC. As well as the President's silence, we must ask: Where is the police force whose first duty is to maintain law and order. . .? While the police force repeatedly pours its members onto the streets to crush peaceful protests by opposition groups, we see no demonstrable same sense of zeal and urgency in cracking down on the mindless political violence blighting the land. . . . Are Zimbabweans asking too much from Mugabe that he not only publicly condemns these acts of madness by his supporters but that he orders the entire police force to crush the armed rebellion - violently if need be? Are Zimbabweans asking too much when they clearly and repeatedly make the clarion call that they have had enough?"

SULLIVAN